

Remarks for the Public Listening Session to shape a
National Agenda on the Environment and the Aging
Iowa City, Iowa -- April 15, 2003

My remarks are all related to preparing for an aging society.

We who are a part of the aging society are concerned about the environmental impact of many of the decisions that have recently been made or are being contemplated. Time allows me to only make five comments.

1. Environmental Assessments should be required to take into account the local land use plan and the ability of the governmental units to provide needed services.

In Johnson County an environmental assessment for a Muslim Youth Camp prepared for the US Army Corp of Engineers has stated "No Impact," when the plans are contrary to the land use plans of the County. Health and safety standards should not be waived. The EPA, should require that environmental assessments take into account the adopted land use plans and the ability of governmental unit to provide needed services. This application is still under consideration. You need to address this issue now.

2. The EPA should formally renounce the "alternative analysis" proposal of the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs within the Office of Management and Budget that lowers the value of a human life from \$6 million to \$3.7 million and in addition, values the lives of persons over 70 at 63% of the worth of a younger person.

After the first listening session in Tampa, Florida it was reported that you (Christine Todd Whitman) said, you "gave no weight to such calculations." Please issue a formal statement to all of your employees, with a copy to the OIRA, OMB and the President, instructing them not to use Mr. Graham's cost saving proposals.

3. I applaud your statement that "people need clean air and clean water and protected land for the quality of life that they expect and deserve." I differ with you however, when you qualified that remark with the statement, "but they also have to be able to afford that, so there is a balance that needs to be struck."

The fact is that we can't afford not to provide clean air, clean water and protected land. These items should not suffer to provide tax cuts.

4. Members of the aging population are concerned not just about their own welfare but the welfare of their children, grandchildren and great grandchildren and their great-great grandchildren. That is why we believe that:

a) efficiency measures should be adopted and enforced now. Gasoline standards should be raised to 40 mpg for cars and light trucks, that would save consumers at least \$45 billion each year and save 3 million barrels of oil per day which is more oil than we get from the Persian Gulf imports, the Artic wildlife refuge and California offshore oil drilling combined.

The Pacific Northwest National Laboratory estimates that federal agencies alone would save \$1 billion annually if they installed currently available, energy-efficient technology.

b) wind power, solar power, geothermal energy and biomass power should be a part of a balanced energy plan.

5. We know that smoking is an environmental problem that impacts the quality and longevity of life. Is it unreasonable to expect that the EPA would advocate banning smoking in all indoor public facilities? This is not a local issue; it is a national issue that the EPA should address without delay.

In closing let me state that there is a perception that the Bush administration has the interest of big business ahead of that of the average citizen. This perception is furthered by this administrations watering down the clean water act, polluting the clean air act, and by failure to protect our national parks and forests. I strongly urge that the EPA in drafting a national agenda on the environment and the aging give these items top priority. You can help this administration help protect our environment and help provide the citizens of this country with clean air, clean water and protected land. We cannot afford to do less. Thank you.

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